

Superintendent Search  
Stakeholder Feedback Summary Report

***Lewis-Palmer***  
***District 38***  
***Monument, Colorado***

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March 2024





**MCPHERSON JACOBSON, LLC**

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

This report summarizes stakeholder feedback in the Lewis-Palmer District 38 Superintendent Search from 1,010 online survey submissions gathered between February 6 and February 22, 2024.

Stakeholders were presented with the opportunity to respond to a combination of multiple choice, rating scale, and constructed response questions. The cumulative results (all respondent groups combined) of answers to these questions are included in this summary.

1. When asked to identify the one group that most closely identified the respondent's connection to the school district, the largest group, as expected, of respondents self-identified as parents (69%). This group was followed by staff members (14%), parents of former students (8%), and community members (6%). Students and others made up 3% of respondents.
2. Respondents were then asked, "What one word best describes how you feel about the district?" Presented here is a word cloud that visually represents the most frequently submitted responses.



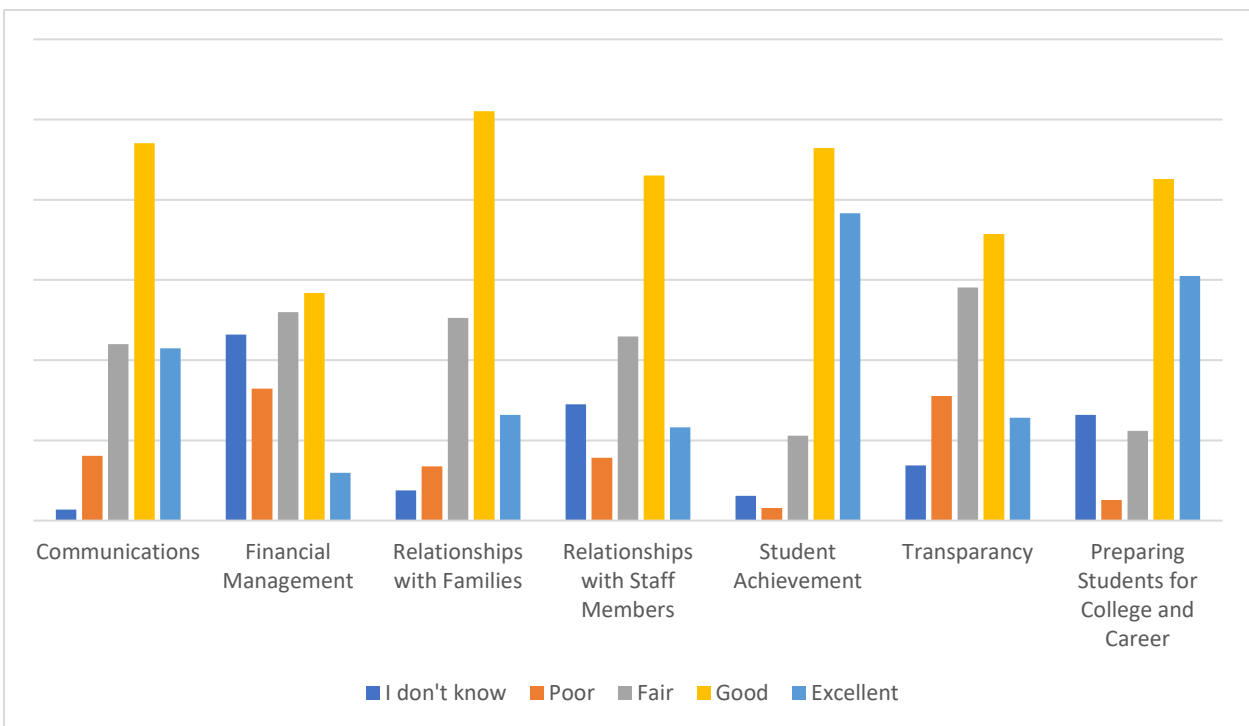
Of the 10 most frequently submitted responses to this question (312 total responses), 78% indicated a favorable perception (good, proud, optimistic, community, hopeful, great, positive, satisfied) of the school district while 22% responded either concerned or disappointed.

3. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to answer the question, “What are three strengths of the school district that superintendent candidates should know?” The most common themes emerging from these responses included:

- **Community and Parental Involvement:** There's a strong recognition of the involvement of parents and the community in the educational process. Comments highlight the importance of engaged parents, involved families, and a supportive community as critical factors in the success of students and schools. This involvement is seen as a foundation for academic success, pride, and the development of a supportive and caring educational atmosphere.
- **Conservatism and Traditional Values:** Many comments indicate a conservative climate supporting traditional values in the educational setting. This includes a focus on basic educational fundamentals, resistance to new educational theories or social experiments, and a desire to maintain high academic standards without the influence of external agendas.
- **Academic Excellence and High Standards:** Academic growth, excellence, and the pursuit of high educational standards are recurrent themes. There's repeated mention of challenging curriculums, dedicated teachers, and many opportunities for students' learning and growth. The emphasis is on preparing students for the future, ensuring they are high achievers, and fostering an environment where excellence in academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities is prioritized.
- **Safety and Well-being of Students:** Safety is appreciated as a priority for the district. There's an acknowledgment of efforts toward creating a safe, secure environment for students to learn and grow, which includes mental health considerations.
- **Financial Responsibility and Resource Management:** There's opposition to increased taxation for schools, with a call for doing more with less and being fiscally responsible. This theme reflects a desire for prudent financial management that supports educational goals without placing undue burden on the community.
- **Quality and Dedication of Teachers:** The quality of teachers and their commitment to students is a recurring theme. There's appreciation for teachers who are dedicated, hardworking, and capable of fostering academic growth. The community values teachers who are supportive, caring, and involved in students' learning, indicating a desire for educators who are committed to their students' success.

- **Inclusivity and Diversity in Education:** While there's a strong emphasis on traditional values, there's also a mention of inclusivity and efforts for a diverse range of classes and topics. This suggests a recognition of the importance of providing students with a broad, well-rounded education that prepares them for a diverse world.

- The next question asked for perceptions (rating scale) about several operational facets of the Lewis-Palmer School District. These included (a) Student Achievement, (b) Communications, (c) Preparing Students for College and Career, (d) Relationships with Families, (e) Transparency, (f) Relationships with Staff Members, and (g) Financial Management. The graph below represents the collective ratings of each item:



- Respondents were asked to select the three most critical issues from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Staff Recruitment and Retention	61.09%	Mental Health Services	15.35%
Teacher Quality	43.56%	Social Emotional Learning	13.56%
Financial Management	30.40%	Diversity and Engagement	12.28%
School Safety and Security	25.64%	Communication	10.89%
Family/ Community Relations	22.77%	Special Education Services	10.89%
College and Career Readiness	21.58%	Facilities and Grounds	9.80%
Academic Outcomes	20.59%		

6. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional critical issues the next superintendent should make a priority. Only two frequent themes emerged as additional critical issues. They were:

- Growth and Infrastructure: Responding to district growth, overcrowding, and the need for new or improved facilities are common concerns. This includes planning for future growth and ensuring that facilities are safe, modern, and capable of supporting high-quality education.
- Values and Ideological Concerns: A substantial number of comments reflect concerns about maintaining conservative values in education, opposing progressive agendas, and ensuring that schools focus on academic excellence rather than social or political ideologies.

7. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next superintendent should have from a list of 23 leadership characteristics. The ranking of these characteristics (from most important to least important) were:

Demonstrates high integrity and ethics and leads by example	53.07%
Places the needs of students above anything else	32.18%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	29.31%
Builds strong community relationships	28.71%
Possesses a background in public education	27.23%
Promotes safety and security across the district	27.03%
Values educating the whole child	25.25%
Communicates effectively	23.07%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	22.77%
Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	21.78%
Thinks and acts strategically	18.51%
Resolves conflict with dignity and grace	16.34%
Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	15.94%

Spends time in classrooms	15.94%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and extracurricular activities	15.64%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	14.95%
Fosters creativity, risk-taking, and innovation	14.06%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	14.06%
Builds strong and diverse teams	13.47%
Delivers improved student outcomes	13.17%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	10.59%
Values school autonomy	10.10%
Previous experience as a superintendent	9.21%

8. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next superintendent should have. Three frequent themes emerged from these comments. They included:
  - **Inclusivity and Understanding of Diversity:** The ability to value and understand diverse perspectives and showing respect for all students' backgrounds and needs indicates a desire for inclusive leadership.
  - **Commitment and Stability:** Many comments express a desire for a leader who is committed to the long-term well-being of the community and the educational institution, indicating a preference for stability and long-term investment.
  - **Non-Political and Unbiased Approach:** There's a notable emphasis on the importance of keeping education separate from political agendas, with a focus on fairness, non-partisanship, and serving the community's educational needs without bias.
  
9. Respondents were next encouraged to identify the three best things about the Tri-Lakes Region that might encourage a candidate to relocate to the area. The most frequent responses included:
  - **Strong Sense of Community:** Many comments emphasize the tight-knit, supportive, and engaged nature of the community. There's a repeated mention of a "small town feel," suggesting that residents value close relationships and a sense of belonging.

This is further underscored by references to strong community support for schools, families, and outdoor activities.

- **Natural Beauty and Outdoor Activities:** The area's natural beauty and access to outdoor recreation are frequently mentioned. Comments highlight the proximity to mountains, trails, and various outdoor activities like hiking, skiing, and biking. This suggests that the community values and takes advantage of its geographical location for leisure and lifestyle quality.
- **Conservative Values and Family Orientation:** Many comments reflect conservative values, a focus on family, and high parent involvement in education and community life. There's an emphasis on traditional, small-town values, respectfulness, and a community that is proud and engaged.
- **Quality of Education and Schools:** The quality of the local schools and the level of parent involvement in education are notable themes. Comments suggest a community that is deeply invested in educational outcomes, with mentions of high-performing schools, engaged parents, and a supportive atmosphere for students and teachers alike.
- **Proximity to Major Cities and Transportation:** While enjoying a small town atmosphere, the community appreciates convenient access to larger cities and transportation hubs. This suggests a balance between enjoying a quieter, small-town lifestyle while still having the amenities and opportunities of larger urban areas within reach.
- **Growth and Opportunity:** There are references to the area growing, but still maintaining its small-town charm. This indicates a community that is facing changes and expansion but hopes to retain its core values and qualities amidst growth.
- **Safety and Quality of Life:** Comments frequently mention the area's safety, low crime rate, and overall quality of life as significant advantages. This theme encompasses a desire for a secure, peaceful environment where families can thrive.
- **Weather and Climate:** The local weather and climate are mentioned as positive aspects, indicating that the community values its environment not just for its beauty but also for the weather conditions that enable an active, outdoor lifestyle year-round.

10. Finally, respondents were asked if there were additional things they thought the Board of Education should consider during this search process. The most common themes arising from these comments included:

- **Conservative Values:** Many comments emphasize a desire for a candidate who shares conservative values and focuses on traditional education priorities over progressive initiatives.
- **Academic Focus and Basic Skills:** There is a strong call for prioritizing the basics of education – reading, writing, arithmetic – and ensuring students receive a strong foundational education. This includes a preference for traditional academic standards over progressive or politically driven curricula.
- **Experience and Leadership:** The community values a candidate with significant experience in education, leadership skills, and a proven track record. They express a preference for someone who does not require on-the-job training and has a history of successful educational administration.
- **Community Engagement and Stability:** Comments indicate a desire for a candidate committed to the region and willing to engage with the community constructively. They should be able to manage relationships with various stakeholders and show a commitment to staying long-term to provide stability.
- **Teacher Support and Compensation:** Recognizing the importance of teachers, there's a call for better pay and more support for educators. This theme is tied to the broader goal of retaining quality teachers and ensuring they have the resources needed to succeed.
- **Non-Politicization of Education:** Many comments request a focus on education rather than politics, indicating a desire for the new superintendent to avoid politicizing school administration and to prioritize students' education over social or political agendas.
- **Safety, Drug Use, and Discipline:** Concerns about student safety, student drug use, and the maintenance of discipline and standards are mentioned, suggesting a need for a superintendent capable of addressing these issues effectively.
- **Commitment to Special Education:** Some comments highlight the importance of special education experience, indicating a need for the superintendent to support, improve, and prioritize the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.
- **Avoidance of Political Agendas:** A recurrent theme is a clear stance against DEI initiatives and the infusion of political agendas into education, with a preference for focusing on traditional educational values and community standards.